

THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

& AMAZON RAIN FOREST



The Galápagos Islands and Amazon Rainforest with Minnesota Public Radio

January 9 – 19, 2028



Join Ben Cathey, chief meteorologist for MPR News, and friends of Minnesota Public Radio on an unforgettable journey through Ecuador, from historic Quito and the lush Amazon rainforest to the legendary Galápagos Islands. Discover Quito's beautifully preserved colonial center before venturing into the Amazon, where expert naturalists will introduce you to its extraordinary wildlife and biodiversity. Then continue to the Galápagos Islands, where we'll stay on Santa Cruz and explore nearby islands, including North Seymour, Santa Fe and the Plaza

Islands. Visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and discover unique wildlife with the help of expert naturalist guides. Come commune with iguanas and snorkel with sea lions on this extraordinary adventure with **Minnesota Public Radio!**

TRIP AT A GLANCE

3 Nights Quito

4 Nights Galápagos Islands

2 Nights Casa del Suizo – Amazon rainforest



**EARTHBOUND
EXPEDITIONS**

Earthbound Expeditions Inc.

P.O. Box 11305, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 USA

Tel: 206.842.9775

www.EarthboundExpeditions.com



Discover Quito's historic center

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

The Amazon rainforest ♦ Explore the Galápagos Islands with expert naturalists ♦ Charles Darwin Research Station ♦ Unequalled diversity of wildlife ♦ Snorkeling with marine life ♦ Opportunities for hikes and nature walks ♦ Historic walking tour of Quito's historic colonial center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site ♦ Colorful markets ♦ Knowledgeable, experienced local guides ♦ Intimate dining experiences ♦ Soak in hot springs ♦ Travel with like-minded public radio listeners

IT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ Travel with Minnesota Public Radio
- ✓ Full-time bilingual tour guide and naturalist
- ✓ Airport and hotel transfers in Ecuador for all guests arriving the day the tour begins
- ✓ Five days of island hopping and exploration in the Galápagos Islands
- ✓ Three days in the Amazon rainforest
- ✓ Domestic flights to/from the Galápagos Islands
- ✓ Accommodation in charming superior 4-star hotels and lodges
- ✓ All breakfasts plus 17 additional multi-course meals
- ✓ Galápagos National Park map
- ✓ Gratuities for your tour guide and drivers
- ✓ Pre-tour suggested reading list
- ✓ Alumni appreciation discounts applied toward future expeditions
- ✓ A small, fun group of soon-to-be public radio friends!

NOT INCLUDED

- ✓ Round-trip air from the U.S. to Ecuador
- ✓ Travel Insurance
- ✓ Anything not listed on the itinerary
- ✓ \$200 Galápagos National Park entrance fee



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TRIP FACTS AND PRICING



10 Days/ 9 Nights *(not including air package below)*

\$8,495 per person double occupancy

\$3,250 single supplement

Trip begins in Quito on January 9, 2028

Trip ends in Quito on January 19, 2028

SAVE UP TO \$200!

- ✓ Pay your final balance by check and save \$100
- ✓ Minnesota Public Radio and Earthbound travel alumni save \$100



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YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS ...

Meal Key: B = Breakfast / L = Lunch / D = Dinner

DAY 1: Sunday, January 9 – Arrive in Quito, Ecuador

Your exciting expedition to Ecuador begins today. After a late evening arrival in Quito, meet your local tour director at the airport and transfer to your deluxe hotel in central Quito. *Overnight in Quito*

DAY 2: Monday, January 10 – Highlights of Historic Quito: A World Heritage Site

On a guided mid-morning tour of Quito, you'll learn about its colonial past, history and culture. Visit the old town and see the Church of San Francisco, one of the first religious buildings constructed in South America by the Spanish. See the facade of La Compañía, the city's most ornate church. Admire the spectacular views of the Valley of Tumbaco. And on a clear day, you can see the impressive volcanoes surrounding the city. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Afterward, continue your visit to the local botanical gardens to observe a diversity of plants from different altitudes and ecosystems. *Overnight in Quito (B, L)*

DAY 3: Tuesday, January 11 – East to the Amazon Jungle

After breakfast, transfer by bus to La Punta Ahuano on the Napo River where you will board a canoe that will take you to your Amazon lodge. Enjoy the tranquility of the lodge and prepare to be amazed by both the wildlife and the Amazon culture. In the afternoon, visit Ahuano village for the opportunity to meet a local Quechua family and learn about their way of life before returning to the hotel. In the evening, dine together at the lodge. *Overnight in the Amazon rainforest at Casa del Suizo (B, L, D)*



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La Casa del Suizo Lodge, Amazon Rainforest

DAY 4: Wednesday, January 12 – A Full Day in a Private Nature Reserve

This morning, after a canoe ride, you can hike in the Misicocha Private Nature Reserve for approximately two hours while viewing the beautiful flora and fauna up close. The Amazon Rainforest is the world's largest ecosystem, so be sure to keep an eye out for the innumerable species of tropical plants and insects. Enjoy the views as you cross suspended bridges and fly through the rain forest on a short zip line basket ride. At the end of the hike, take a rafting trip on a traditional balsa log raft. The balance of the day is at leisure. You may choose one of the optional tours, such as the Rescue Center or the Canopy Adventure Park. Tonight, savor dinner with the group at the lodge. *Overnight in the Amazon rainforest at Casa del Suizo (B, L, D)*

DAY 5: Thursday, January 13 – The Andes Cloud Forest via Natural Hot Springs

This morning, board a canoe for the return trip to La Punta Ahuano and enjoy a scenic drive through small villages, stopping for lunch in Tena. After lunch, continue to the hot springs at Papallacta, tucked away in the Andes Mountains. After relaxing at Papallacta hot springs, continue on to the Wyndham Quito airport hotel for an overnight and dinner. *Overnight near Quito airport (B, L, D)*

DAY 6: Friday, January 14 – Off to the Galápagos Islands

After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight to the Galápagos Islands where you will spend the next five days island hopping with your naturalist. Upon arrival in Baltra, you'll board the ferry for a short transfer to Santa Cruz Island and then continue by motorcoach to Puerto Ayora. Passing through the highlands of Santa Cruz, you'll see the enormous change in vegetation from dry areas full of cacti to rainforest and fern zones. This afternoon, visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about island conservation and the huge efforts to preserve this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy an independent lunch at a local restaurant. This evening we'll have a "welcome to the islands" dinner at a local restaurant. *Overnight in Puerto Ayora (B, D)*



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Snorkel, swim & Experience the best of the Galápagos

“The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man.”
– Charles Darwin



DAYS 7, 8 & 9: January 15, 16 & 17 - Explore the Galápagos Islands

Over the course of the next three days you'll enjoy full-day boat excursions to many of the nearby islands. Each of these islands has its own unique beauty to offer. North Seymour is a flat island and home to magnificent frigate birds like the blue-footed boobies. South Plaza Island is home to a large colony of sea lions and offers excellent examples of the typical flora like towering cacti “trees” which form the principal

diet for land iguanas and cactus finch. Bartolomé Island is a tiny island which boasts one of the most spectacular views of the archipelago from Pinnacle Rock. Climb to the 375-foot peak to enjoy this stunning view. Santa Fe is one of the oldest islands of the Galápagos and in its tranquil bay, one can find green sea turtles and spotted eagle rays while sea lions bask in the sun on the beach. *Overnight in Puerto Ayora (B, L, D)*



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DAY 10: Tuesday, January 18 - Relax on Santa Cruz Island

Today explore Tortuga Bay and a local beach near the town of Santa Cruz. Here you can just enjoy the beach and have a relaxing time. There is also the option to rent a kayak here. Later this morning, transfer by a local boat to the pier where a bus will be waiting to take us to the highlands of Santa Cruz. Along the way, enjoy lunch at a local ranch, a visit to a lava tunnel, and an opportunity to see the famous giant tortoises in their natural environment. Return to the hotel in time for a farewell dinner. *Overnight in Puerto Ayora (B, L, D)*

DAY 11: Wednesday, January 19 – Fly from the Galápagos to Quito

This morning is at your leisure. Later, transfer to the airport for your flight to Quito.

Upon arrival in Quito this afternoon, you'll be met and transferred to a nearby 4-star hotel. Relax in a private room and enjoy dinner at the hotel before returning to the airport for your international flight home. Most flights to the US depart very late in the evening or in the wee hours of the early morning. (B, D)

***Note:** Please book your return flight for the evening of January 19 (11pm or later). If you are unable to find a suitable flight that night or in the early hours of January 20 your complimentary hotel room will remain available until 1pm on January 20 for your convenience.

QUESTIONS AND RESERVATIONS

info@earthboundexpeditions.com

T. 206.842.9775

- Itinerary Subject to Change -



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DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE ISLAND HOPPING

This list is intended as a sampling of the islands that may be visited while in the Galápagos archipelago. The exact itinerary will depend on weather conditions and National Park permits.



BARTOLOMÉ ISLAND

Bartolomé is one of the younger islands in the Galápagos and is known for its dramatic volcanic landscapes. Covering just half a square mile, the island features striking red, orange, green and black lava formations and an extinct volcanic cone offering sweeping views of the surrounding islands. Its most famous landmark is Pinnacle Rock, one of the most recognizable sights in the Galápagos. Visitors can swim and

snorkel nearby, where penguins, sea turtles, white-tip reef sharks and colorful tropical fish are often seen. Galápagos penguins also nest in the area, while green sea turtles use the island seasonally for mating and nesting. With its unusual geology, abundant wildlife and beautiful twin bays, Bartolomé offers a memorable glimpse into the volcanic origins and remarkable biodiversity of the Galápagos.

NORTH SEYMOUR

The endemic plant of this island is the *lignum vitae* tree, an icon of the site. In the summertime they look like dead trees, but after the winter rains, they become green overnight giving the island a very special appearance. Other plant species abundant in the area are the *Opuntia* cactus, *Croton*, *Castille* and *Sesuvium*. Sometimes you can watch green iguanas taking shade under bushes. These animals were introduced in Seymour to test whether they can survive another landscape as they are found usually in Baltra. Frigates can be observed along the walking trail along with other species such as lava gulls, sea lions, brown terns, pelicans, and tropical birds.

ISLA SANTA FE

Santa Fe Island, also called Barrington Island after Admiral Samuel Barrington, is a small island of 9 mi² which lies in the center of the Galápagos archipelago. Geologically it is one of the oldest, since volcanic rocks of about 4 million years old have been found here. The vegetation of the island is characterized by brush, palo santo trees and stands of a large variety of the prickly pear cactus *opuntia echios*. The visitor sites are Barrington Bay on the northeastern side. There is great snorkeling with white tip sharks, sea turtles, rays, and colorful fish. Large numbers of sea lions are found in the bay.



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PLAZA ISLANDS

Just east of Santa Cruz Island, the Plaza Islands are distinct for their native populations of flora and fauna, but only South Plaza Island has a landing site. As you cross the jet-black lava rock, you will see one of the largest populations of land iguanas in the Galápagos Islands and one of the most unique. It's here where male marine iguanas have bred with female land iguanas to create the only hybrid land/marine iguanas in the archipelago. The remaining land iguanas, though smaller in size than other island populations, feature vibrant yellows and reds and enjoy the local delicacies of Opuntia cacti and the indigenous Sesuvium. Visitors will also see several big groups of sea lions, including one significant bachelor colony.

Meet Your Host!



Ben Cathey is the chief meteorologist for MPR News, leading daily weather coverage including Climate Cast and the Updraft weather blog.

A nationally recognized science communicator, Cathey holds certifications from both the American Meteorological Society and the National Weather Association. He came to MPR News from a Ted Scripps

Fellowship in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado Boulder, the first meteorologist selected in the program's 30-year history. Before joining MPR News, Cathey spent time reporting in Tierra del Fuego for the Pulitzer Center, documenting climate impacts on wildfires for a multimedia project. His television career includes positions at WVLT-TV in Knoxville, Tenn. and WTVG-TV in Toledo, Ohio, where he covered heat waves, droughts, endangered wildlife and natural disasters including floods, tornadoes, derechos, and wildfires.

Cathey has earned four Emmy Awards, seven Edward R. Murrow Awards, and was named AP's Weather Anchor of the Year for Tennessee's Large Markets in 2020. He holds a bachelor's degree in meteorology and broadcast journalism from the University of Miami.



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Know Before You Go!

Reservations and Deposits: A \$1,000 per person deposit is needed to confirm your space on this journey. You can make a credit card deposit online or by phone. Deposits are refundable, minus a \$250 per person cancellation fee, for 60 days from the processing date or 90 days prior to departure, whichever comes first. Deposits made within 90 days of departure are nonrefundable. Final payment is also nonrefundable, which is why we strongly urge guests to purchase travel insurance.

Not Included: International airline tickets, alcoholic beverages, room service and gratuities for hotel staff, travel insurance, meals not listed in brochure, and any activities or items not listed in your itinerary.

Physical Requirements: It is the responsibility of each guest to be aware of their physical abilities or limitations and to be in sufficient good health to undertake the trip. [Click here](#) to read “Is an Earthbound trip right for you?” or call the Earthbound office for more details.

Active Days on Shore and at Sea:

This journey includes transportation by boat (in the islands) and motorized canoe (in the Amazon). Walking tours/hikes may last two to three hours and could include gentle walks of up to two miles, often on uneven or cobblestone surfaces. Now is the time to prepare by ensuring you're comfortable being on your feet for extended periods. You're always welcome to relax at a café or opt out of any activity. Additionally, there may be times when you need to handle your own luggage, so pack light and make sure your bags are easy to carry. A little preparation will go a long way in making your Ecuador adventure comfortable and enjoyable!

Travel Insurance: Earthbound Expeditions strongly encourages the purchase of travel insurance coverage. We include information on trip insurance in your deposit information.

Events and Hosted Journeys: If a planned event is cancelled for any reason, another event will be included in its place. This is not grounds for refund. Events are subject to change. Also, if a host or special guest is unable to attend as planned, Earthbound Expeditions will do its utmost to find another host who has similar interests, talents, and expertise. The inability of a host to participate in a tour is not grounds for a full or partial refund.

Terms & Conditions: [Click here](#) to read the full terms and conditions.



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